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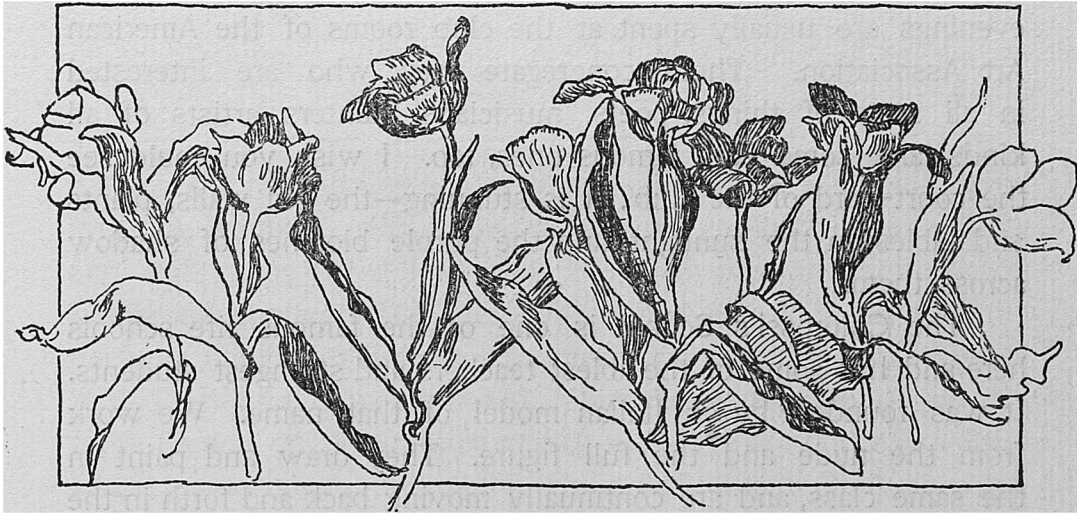
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#### PARIS LETTER

I HAVE been to the Sorbonne to see the Puvis de Chavannes. Of all the great things I have seen it is the greatest. It is a symphonic and epic poem combined; one of those quiet, big things that transport you into another world. It is much finer than those other great decorative frescoes in the Pantheon. They seem almost trivial in comparison,

I enjoy the Luxembourg immensely, especially the things by the impressionists. All of the landscapes are wonderfully full of light, yet not all brilliant. Zorn's picture, "The Fisherman," of which you published the etching, is very quiet in color.

I did not like Whistler's portrait of his mother at first, but it grows upon me and I find myself returning to it every time I go to the gallery. It is not only a skillful piece of painting, but it is something more, for he has painted it with so much reverence and sympathy. A friend of mine, after standing before it for some time, said, "That's the way I feel about my mother." Amand Jean also has a wonderful picture here.



The artists and students are gradually returning from the country, and the schools and clubs are filling up. During the

*PARIS LETTER* day we work in the schools and visit the galleries, and the evenings are usually spent at the club rooms of the American Art Association. There congregate men who are interested in all sorts of things, poets, musicians, painters, artists of all kinds, and some very famous ones, too. I wish you could see the court-yard of the club; it is stunning—the old walls, plants and tables in the sunlight and the purple blotches of shadow across them.



The Colorossi's School is one of the famous life schools here and has some of the ablest teachers and strongest students. It was founded by an Italian model of that name. We work from the nude and the full figure. They draw and paint in the same class, and are continually moving back and forth in the different media. Most of the models are young women and one of them especially is celebrated for her beauty. At one time she was dressed in green and yellow silk, a perfect harmony. The professor simply went wild over her, and over our work too, but in a very different way.

When it gets too dark to work we go for a stroll over to the Seine. Some of the finest things imaginable are to be seen along the river after the sun has set. Looking down it toward the west, the towers of Notre Dame loom up purple against the rosy and smoky sky. Toward the southwest is the great Pantheon dome in all its serious grandeur. As the darkness of the night comes on we lean on the wall and watch the boats stealing silently along the water, the moon's reflections coming nearer and nearer. We walk home through a little old street and are continually running across some old church or old, old tower.



I must tell you of a great thing I have enjoyed—a walk, or rather a pilgrimage, to that shrine, Barbizon, and the immortal forest of Fontainebleau. One Saturday three of us were eating our dinners together when some one suggested in a joking manner that we take a “stroll” down to Fontainebleau. It started

us to thinking, and we soon decided to "stroll" as far as we could and then take the train back to Paris. We went home and got our storm coats and sketching materials and started, making our way through the suburbs, past the walls and forts, into the country. How good it was to get out into the fields and walk along those fine roads bordered with linden trees and Lombardy poplars. The atmosphere was full of haze, and the perfume of flowers and fresh pungent odor of the earth put us in a delicious, absorbent mood. It began to rain, but who cares for a French rain? At four o'clock we stopped at a little village to get some lunch. We went into a little old inn, where some peasants were drinking, and asked for *café-au-lait*. The fat landlady as well as her guests were perfectly amazed, and after they had jabbered at us awhile we concluded we would take what we could get; so, after partaking of a lunch, which consisted of a jug of sour wine, some bread, and a lump of over ripe cheese, we felt refreshed and started on. At a place farther on, about eight, we had a good supper, and feeling not at all tired we decided to go on to Corbeil on the Seine, that night. That part of the walk was very impressive, passing through little villages where men and women were sitting on benches by their doors resting in the twilight. As it grew darker the road took us through wooded places and sleeping hamlets, where the quiet was broken only by the noise of our shoes on the cobble-stone pavements, or the baying of a farmer's dog off in some court-yard. About eleven we climbed down the hill at Corbeil, awoke the landlady at the hotel and were soon in bed and fast asleep. The next morning we felt so refreshed and happy that we concluded to go on to Fontainebleau. On looking from our window we saw what we had not seen the night before, that a little canal ran by the hotel, passing under stone bridges and picturesque old mills, then down through the meadows like a band of silver to join the distant Seine. We drank our *café-au-lait* and started out through the meadows

*PARIS LETTER* toward Chailly. What a grand morning it was! The sunlight, the cool, fresh air, the fields of poppies and clover, and, above all, that concert we have so often listened to in the meadows about old Munich—the skylarks mounting toward the sky and pouring forth their happy songs in a shower of sweet melody. Now and then a peasant with his wife would pass us on their way to church. Off in a field a blue-bloused garçon was herding his sheep, and a curé with his broad, black hat and black habit, a picturesque figure, making his way through the fields. When we reached Chailly it had become misty again. Here we branched off the main road to Fontainebleau to go to Barbizon and were soon there. We felt we were on sacred ground and the charm of the pictures by those great men of the school of Barbizon came over me. I felt I understood them as I never had before. They are poems.

We tarried here awhile to rest and eat our dinners and then started through the grand old forest. Well, you can simply find everything there—wild, craggy places, old gnarled oaks and pines and beautiful drives; Rousseau's old women carrying bundles of fagots on their backs, and—well, everything. About dusk we reached the town of Fontainebleau, a fashionable little place, completely surrounded by the woods. Next morning we walked all through the park and saw where Louis XIV held his revels. You remember Dumas' descriptions. The palace is wonderful. That afternoon we went over to the Seine, then up through the flat portion of the forest to that part called Bois-le-Roi and took the train back to the city, not so tired as one would expect after a sixty-mile walk.

R. S.

